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NEXT MEETING
THURSDAY, 20th September 2012

THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF HARINGEY
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SOCIETY NEWS

MEETING VENUE :

Ashmole School, Southgate, London N14 5RJ.

The day for all meetings is usually the third Thursday of each month. The exceptions are August, when currently we do not hold a meeting, and December, when the Christmas Meet has always traditionally been held during the second week. However, in case of changes – and there have been a few over the last year or so – it is always advisable to double-check the dates below.

**NOTE - as below - the Meeting information is also on the *NEW* website:
www.ashastro.co.uk – updated from May**

Doors open - 7.30pm : Main speaker - 8.00pm : Finish - 10.00pm sharp!

New or updated information is in *italics*

2012

September 20th : *Jim Webb “What’s Up Doc?”*

October 18th : AGM and Small Talk

November 15th - *Bo Maxwell : “The Latest News From Mars”*

Moved from September

December 13th – Christmas Meet and Guiz VIII

ASH Committee

October is approaching and it will be time for another AGM. The committee has been more or less the same for the last few years but now is the time for some change. Charles Towler, Secretary and Membership Secretary, is having to step down as a result of family and other commitments. He has our thanks for all the time he has spent in these two posts. As there are now two vacancies, I am putting out the call to the general membership that if anyone is interested in stepping into the breach and taking on these any of these positions, please feel free to stand forth – the committee needs you. Strictly speaking, the positions of Public Relations Officer (PRO) and Vice Chairman are also open as Mat currently holds these as well as Editor, which he is happy to continue with. These are not posts that required every minute of your time but the time we all give is necessary for the smooth running of the Society. Committee meetings are held at various times (as become necessary) during the year and last 2 to 3 hours. Nominations will be open at the start of the next meeting or by post or e-mail.

COVER

NEIL ARMSTRONG 1930 – 2012

It will have hardly passed anyone’s attention that Neil Armstrong, the first Man to set foot on the Moon, died on 25th August 2012, aged 82. He served in the US Navy from 1949 to 1952, and his ashes were buried at sea on 14th September, from the flight-deck of USS Philippine Sea.

Photo NASA

SOCIETY NEWS



We meet in the Drama Room at Ashmole School, (previously the Curriculum Support Building - still noted as such in the map). This is the low building, (right), just past the Performing Arts Centre.



MEETING PREVIEW : **September 20th : Jim Webb : "What's Up Doc?"**

As noted, Bo Maxwell has had to cancel the September Meeting, but will now be speaking about Mars at the November. Instead for this month Chairman Jim says he will be taking look at what we have been throwing at our Solar System – what has been sent; finally got there and currently on the way. There will be lots of pictures, latest information and, if lucky, maybe even a laser or two! Which explains his esoteric title for the talk "What's Up Doc?" !



MEETING REVIEW : **July 19th : Nik Szymanek : "Photographing the Night Sky"**



Nik's talk at the July meeting looked more at his amazing photographs of the night sky.

He started with 'simple' photographs that in reality anybody could do (though rarely do do), that of photographing naked-eye objects and phenomena in the sky.



Even such as everyday objects as the Moon (or should that be 'every night' objects?) can make an interesting photo, especially when framed by trees or somewhat closer objects. Phases give interesting views of the Lunar surface, as they are brought into better relief by shadows. Even small magnification will do this. Even from his location in Essex, he's imaged aurora. He of course travels a lot (and not just by tube...) and is well-known of his astronomical images from sites around the one. One regular one is the La Palma Observatory in the Canary Islands, where he reckons he can get naked-eye observing down to +7.9 magnitude, whereas it is usually more like a maximum of +6.



He also discussed the move to digital photography. He of course started with 'proper' film, but he mainly uses digital these days. He made the observation that with film you had to do most of the work, whereas with digital, it does most of the work for you! However this still means a lot of work in 'digital darkrooms' is going to be necessary, which these days this invariably means Photoshop. Even with this sophisticated software though, you still have to work at it! He recalled using six hour exposures, and using three filters (red, blue, green) to get the detail in some images. But that was only the start as this all had to be digitally assembled to get the final result.

Mat

CHAIRMAN'S QUARTERS



What a month it's been! Two parallel Olympic Universes churning out gold, silver and bronze like there was no tomorrow. Purple and red garments everywhere; politicians boring the pants of us and Mayors (well one, at least) having us in stitches. How good is that? Very, as it happens – it serves as a reminder of what striving for excellence can do. The best, on the day, will get the gold – the rest get silver, bronze or just a placing in the tables. To some the 'non-gold' represents failure, how far from the truth. My own Olympic participation was going to watch the men's Marathon, by the river. We all cheered the leaders, roared at the British guy but most remarkably a lot of people stayed right to the very end – strangers from all over the world chatting to each other in a mood of friendliness and elation. When the last man came along, quite far behind the rest of the field, the cheers that he got were just deafening! Hearing that was inspirational – it wasn't the notion that he had "just taken part", it was the fact that he had aimed high! He might not have got to the front of the pack but he still did something beyond his perceived capabilities and that made him the champion that deserved that cheering.

In karate one is taught that you do not aim for the target, you aim well beyond it! It is an odd trait that we have, which is to slow down as the target is reached. By aiming beyond, we are still at full tilt when we cross that 'finishing line' or reach the target. That is how records are broken. OK, some are so 'good' that they can afford to ease off and 'chill out' a bit at the line – Usain Bolt is one such exceptional example who stands out of the pack. Not everyone is a super-star but each one of us can shine out in our own way, without the necessity of global adulation. Yet these global superstars, whether abled or disabled, are the very people to whom we can aspire and without whom the world would be a poorer place.

When we look at the night sky we marvel at the bright points of light up there. Sirius stands out as the brightest star and yet, in reality, it is just over eight light years (LY) away and 25 times brighter than the sun. Betelgeuse is noticeable in the same vicinity, not as bright as Sirius, yet about 600 LY away and 100,000 as bright as the Sun! Then there is the tiny, barely visible on a good dark night, fuzzy patch of light in Andromeda that is a galaxy 2.5 million LY away and consisting of something like a trillion stars! Novas and super-novas – well that's another story. Yet what we see is not the whole picture – the 'personality' is the key here. When we look at a photograph of something, we are seeing a limited representation of it. A well developed 'classic' black and white photographic print can show up to a thousand shades of grey. The same image on a computer monitor will show a maximum of 256 shades of grey. This capability is referred to the dynamic range. The human eye has a dynamic range more like 1,000,000 to 1! Modern imaging techniques have improved the ability to record details of celestial scenes far beyond what was achievable even 30 years ago. But each image is processed and made into either an aesthetically pleasing picture or a scientifically convenient representation of the actual object in question. This, in itself, opens up a spectacular means of seeing the wonders of the heavens. And yet there is that sheer moment of achievement when one looks into the eyepiece of a telescope and sees the full dynamic range of the sky, the dazzle of the stars, the subtle details of the planets; the Moon; nebulae etc – the contact with actual light-waves that emanated from them. Those are moments of gold and are worth pursuing at every opportunity – overcoming the vagaries of our weather and persevering until they happen.

See you at the next Meeting.

Jim

The Night Sky : July - September 2012

THE PLANETS

MERCURY : Setting very soon after the Sun, so very close and really too close for safe observation.

VENUS : Brilliant in the morning skies for those you can rise early! It is at magnitude -4. Moon close 12th October.

MARS : Faint, in Libra around magnitude -1, in the west after Sunset. Three-day crescent Moon close on 19th September. Also near on 18th October.

JUPITER : High up in the morning skies in Taurus. Moon close 5th October.

SATURN : In the western evening skies in Virgo, magnitude 0.4. The rings are still opened up. Two-day old crescent Moon close on 18th September

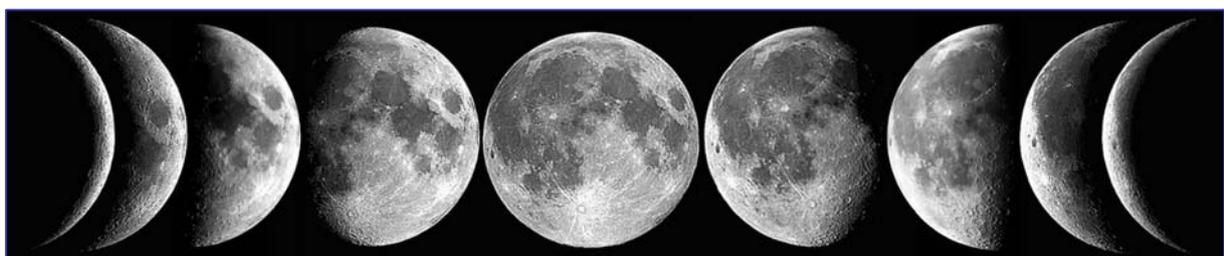
URANUS : Moon close on 30th September

NEPTUNE : Moon close on 3rd and 31st August

There could be views of the crescent Moon with Mars and Jupiter this month, but here is the equally thin two-day crescent Moon – just after the Annular Eclipse this is 22nd May, 2012, over Arizona.



THE MOON



NEW 16th September

FIRST 22nd

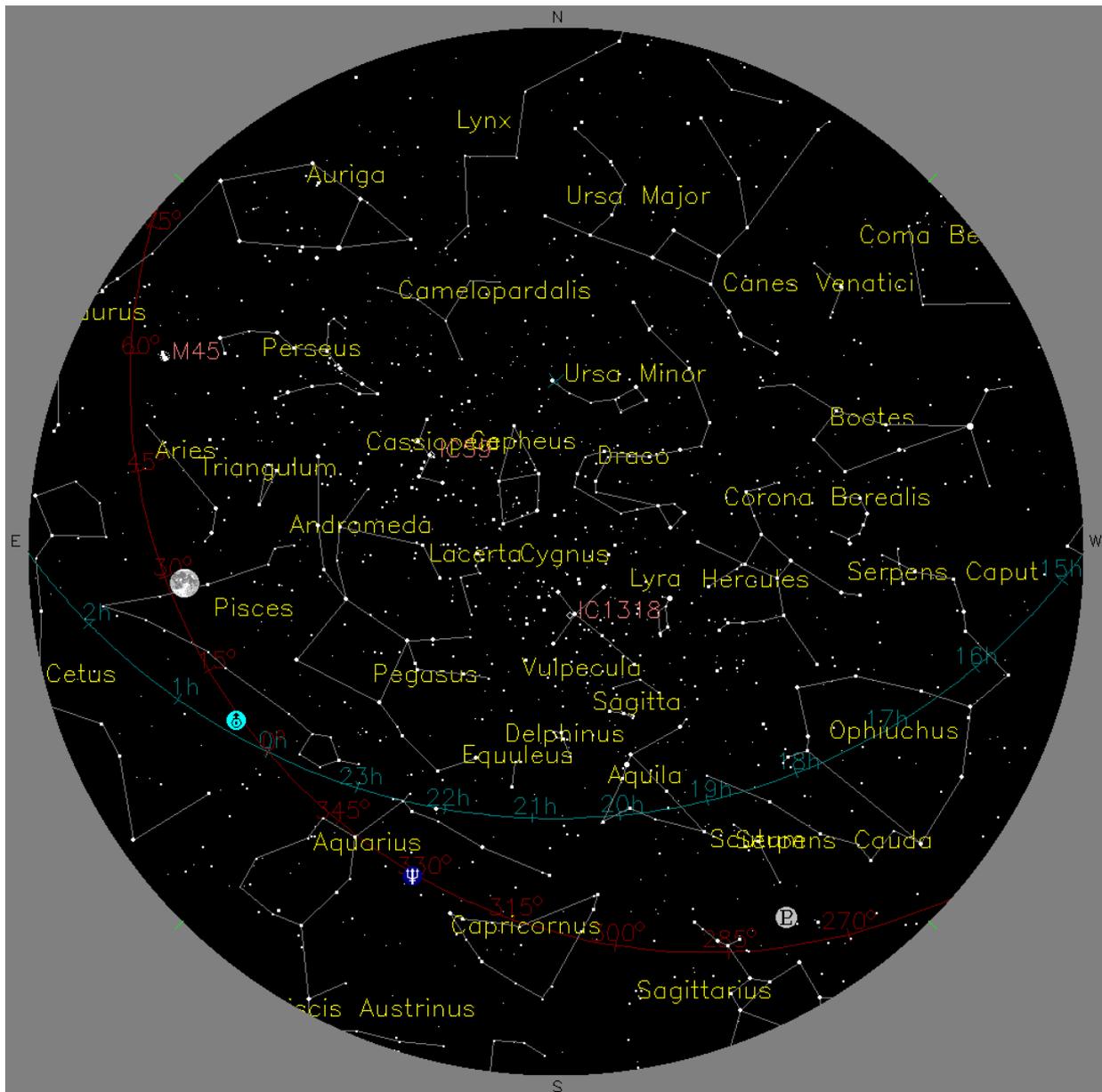
FULL 30th

LAST 8th October

NEW 15th

THE NIGHT SKY : September – October 2012

As of 1st October 2012, 20:00 BST



KEY	
 MERCURY	 SATURN
 VENUS	 URANUS
 MARS	 NEPTUNE
 JUPITER	 PLUTO



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NEXT MEETING **THURSDAY 20th September 2012**

THE NEW 'SITE - UNDER BETA TEST : www.ashastro.co.uk

Note there are now 'ASH' email addresses – as above

General queries to <info@ashastro.co.uk>

[THE ORIGINAL WEB SITE : www.ashastro.org]